



Executive Officers: P14, Bill 59
John Erickson, Young's Market Company –Chair
Beau Oshiro, C&S Wholesale – Vice Chair
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores – Secretary/Treasurer
John Schilf, Rainbow Sales and Marketing - Advisor
Stan Brown, Acosta – Advisor
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores – Advisor
Barry Taniguchi, KTA Superstores – Advisor
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores – Immediate Past Chair
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

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DATE: Wednesday, October 5, 2016

TIME: 10 A.M.

LOCATION: KAPOLEI HALE

TO: CITY & COUNTY OF HONOLULU COUNCIL

Ernie Martin, Council Chair

Ikaika Anderson, Council Vice-Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

RE: Bill 59 (2016)

POSITION: Oppose

Dear Chairman Martin, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Council:

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

We are opposed to Bill 59 (2016), which seeks to prohibit the use of reusable plastic bags and compostable plastic bags. While HFIA understands the intent of the proposal, we are concerned about its impact on retailers and on the local people, particularly those who are low-income and for whom even a dollar makes a difference when it comes to buying groceries and other necessities.

2015 initiated a transition period for both Oahu's retailers and their customers. We appreciate the intent of the existing ordinance and we all want it to work. Some retailers are accommodating customers who forget to bring in their reusable fabric bag by selling or providing reusable plastic bags as permitted by ordinance.

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Council

Regrettably, if Bill 59 is passed, retailers will be forced to throw these bags away, which seems contrary to the desired intent.

The proposed bill would largely limit retailers to providing paper bags, which do not perform well when wet. Retailers provide items that perspire, such as refrigerated liquids and frozen items, a single-use paper bag may rip while holding these items.

As retailers, it is our responsibility to keep prices reasonable and to provide quality service by accommodating our customers. However, small and medium businesses often struggle to meet new regulations and bans because many lack the necessary resources. Extending the ban to include compostable bags and reusable plastic bags may seem like a small cost, but we must be mindful that bans in general significantly impact businesses, especially those that are small and local, whose livelihood must flourish in order to continue growing Hawaii's economy.

Hawaii is one of the most expensive places in the world to feed a family and retailers are working hard to not increase the price of food and goods while also striving to provide quality customer service. If we continue to work together to find balance, we can fulfill the intent of the existing ordinance and keep prices down.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.